

Dicaeum trigonostigma rubropygium was found fairly frequently in sunny open spots within the tidal forest. A series of four specimens was in breeding condition. The bird is primarily a Malaysian and Phillipine species. It occurs sparingly in Burma and was collected many years ago in a limited area in eastern Assam (Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh District).

Nesting of the Shoebill *Balaeniceps rex* Gould in the Bangweulu swamps

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On 5th May 1970 we took part in a low-level (300 feet) aerial survey over the Bangweulu swamps and flood plains, north-eastern Zambia. The aircraft was piloted by Jack Uys, and P. Macartney was also a passenger. Twenty Shoebills were counted along the Lulimala River between Chiundaponde ($12^{\circ} 15' S.$, $30^{\circ} 35' E.$) and the Lulimala Game Camp ($12^{\circ} 12' S.$, $30^{\circ} 07' E.$). Three nests were also seen, with parents in attendance. Two of the nests contained two eggs; the other contained one egg. Another nesting pair was seen near the Kaleya Game Camp on the Lukulu River ($11^{\circ} 55' S.$, $30^{\circ} 15' E.$); the nest contained two eggs. In subsequent flights later the same month a further two nests, with birds sitting on them, were seen in the Lulimala River area, making a total of six nests seen in the whole survey.

The nests were about four feet in diameter, amongst riverine papyrus. They were easy to see from the air, as they seemed to be on islets surrounded by swamp. The surrounding vegetation had been trampled down, so that there appeared to be a round bare patch of earth, with the nest apparently constructed of ambatch in the centre.

No nests were seen during aerial surveys in the previous six months (October to April), and none were seen in the extensive, permanent swamp bordering on Lake Bangweulu itself. The habitat favoured by the Shoebill also seems to be preferred by the Sitatunga Antelope *Tragelaphus spekei* Sclater.

The only previous breeding record from the Bangweulu area is that by T. C. Fooks and others. Fooks photographed a young bird at its nest on 8th October 1961. It was considered to be some six or seven weeks old, from an egg laid perhaps in late July (Benson 1961). Thus the eggs which we saw were laid some three months earlier in the season. Apart from these Bangweulu breeding records, the only other one from south of the equator seems to be one of three young at Lake Kabamba, in the south-eastern Congo, also in October (Chapin 1932).

While the Shoebill is certainly not common in Bangweulu, our observations do at least suggest that it is holding its own there. It is to be hoped that this also applies to another area of swamp in north-eastern Zambia, the Mweru Marsh, enclosing Lake Mweru-wa-Ntipa, where in December 1964 six birds were counted in a single flight (Keith and Vernon 1969).

References:

- Benson, C. W. 1961. The breeding of the Whale-headed Stork or Shoe-bill in Northern Rhodesia. *N. Rhod. Journ.* 4(6): 557-560.
Chapin, J. P. 1932. The birds of the Belgian Congo. *Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.* 65.
Keith, G. S. and Vernon, C. J. 1969. Bird notes from northern and eastern Zambia. *Puku* 5: 131-139.